

Dishes with portion-control markers effective

Written by Kelli Bradshaw

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Sometimes simple ideas work best. That seems to be the case with a plate and cereal bowl equipped with markers for proper portion sizes when it comes to helping people lose weight. The dishes appear to help obese patients with diabetes lose weight and decrease their use of glucose-controlling medications, according to a report in the Archives of Internal Medicine. In the past 40 years, the number of obese U.S. adults increased from 23.4 percent to 30.9 percent – and most cases of Type-2 diabetes can be attributed directly to obesity. When you consider that restricting calories has been shown to improve blood sugar control in diabetics, in part by controlling weight, you get an idea of how powerful a simple tool like a portion control dish can be. Many studies have shown the number of calories ingested is directly related to the serving size offered. At a time when restaurants seem to be offering ever-larger meals, and the rate of obesity is soaring, most people seem to be unable to determine what correct portion size is on their own.

Researchers at the University of Calgary conducted a six-month study of commercially available portion control plates and bowls. The plates were divided into sections for carbohydrates, proteins, cheese and sauce, with the rest left open for vegetables. The plates provided for appropriate calorie intake for men (approximately 800 calories) and women (approximately 650 calories). The cereal bowl held a 200-calorie meal of cereal and milk.

Half of the study participants used the plates; the other half received the usual care of being instructed by dietitians. Those using the plates and bowls lost 5 percent of their body weight as compared to those not using the plates, who lost an average of 0.1 percent of their body weight. Significantly, 16.9 percent of those using the portion-control plates lost 5 percent of their body

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weight as opposed to 4.6 percent of those who did not use the plates. Researchers say this is important because a 5 percent weight loss has been shown to decrease morbidity and mortality associated with obesity-linked disorders such as cancer and heart attack. Additionally, 26.2 percent of those who used the portion -control plates decreased their use of diabetes medications after six months as opposed to 10.8 percent of those who did not use the plates. Researchers say these inexpensive tools can help overweight populations with and without diabetes. For information about portion control plates and bowls in this study, browse The Diet Plate Web site at www.thedietplate.us.

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